

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

In the Drawings:

Please replace FIGS. 1D, 2B and 3B with the two (2) replacement drawings sheets attached herewith.

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application, as amended.

Claims 1–4, 6–9 and 14 have been amended, generally, for reasons unrelated to patentability, i.e., to remove reference numerals. Claim 6 was also amended to remove the term “characterized by the following steps.”

Claim Rejections – § 112, Second Paragraph

Claims 1–5 and 9–13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In response, Claim 1 has been amended to recite certain features of the claimed invention more clearly. Claim 1, as amended, recites, *inter alia*, a stripper including first and second movable parts that are movable into, and out of, respective first and second strip-out positions in which the first and second movable parts strip out the sheet material from the slots of the stacker wheel, where the second movable part of the stripper is lockable in the second strip-out position and, when released, moves out of the second strip-out position and rotates along with the rotating stacker wheel. Support for this amendment may be found, for example, within the Specification, at Paragraph 0028 (Page 7), as well as the figures. No new matter has been added, and Applicants submit that the § 112, second paragraph, rejection has been overcome.

Claim Rejections – § 112, First Paragraph

Claims 1–14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The Office Action alleges that “the specification fails to provide a description of the structure which locks and unlocks the second movable part of the stripper to allow for second movable part to be locked in the strip-out position and to be moved along with the rotating stacker wheel in the not-locked state” (Page 2). Applicants disagree.

As discussed above, Claim 1 has been amended to recite certain features of the invention more clearly, including a second moveable part that is “lockable” in the second strip-out position, and that, when “released,” rotates along with the stacker wheel. Claim 6 recites, *inter alia*, releasing a second movable part of the stripper from the strip-out position and moving along with the rotating stacker wheel when the first part of the stripper is moved out of

the strip-out position, and locking the second moved-along part of the stripper in the strip-out position when the spiral slot stacker is prepared for stacking the next sheet material stack.

The Specification clearly teaches several different embodiments that “achieve the result that the second part 2b of the stripper 2 rotates along with the stacker wheel 1” (Paragraph 0028). For example, in one embodiment, the Specification teaches that a “separate drive” may be provided, while in another embodiment, the Specification teaches that “the stripper is connected to the driving shaft of the stacker wheel via a not shown coupler and locked in its strip-out position by means of a release mechanism or is released via the release mechanism ... so that it synchronously rotates with the stacker wheel 1” (Paragraph 0028). With respect to the latter embodiment, the Specification further teaches that “instead of a mechanical release mechanism the coupling can have the design of a magnetic coupling adapted to be electrically actuated” (Paragraph 0028). Accordingly, Applicants submit that the claims are enabled, and respectfully request that the § 112, first paragraph, rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Drawing Objection

The drawings were objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a) as failing to show “the structure to lock and unlock the second movable part of the stripper” (Office Action at Pages 2–3). In response, FIGS. 1D, 2B and 3B have been amended to depict a rectangular box labeled “release mechanism” and identified by reference numeral “7.” Support for this amendment may be found within Paragraph 0028, which has also been amended to include reference numeral “7.” Applicants submit that additional structure is not required to be depicted under Rule 83(a),¹ because the different embodiments of the release mechanism discussed in Paragraph 0028, i.e., the “mechanical release mechanism” and the “electrically-actuated magnetic coupling,” are conventional features known to one skilled in the art. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the drawing objection has been overcome.

¹ Rule 83(a) states:

However, conventional features disclosed in the description and claims, where their detailed illustration is not essential for a proper understanding of the invention, should be illustrated in the drawing in the form of a graphical drawing symbol or a labeled representation (e.g., a labeled rectangular box).

Conclusion

In view of the amendments and remarks presented herein, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance and should now be passed to issue.

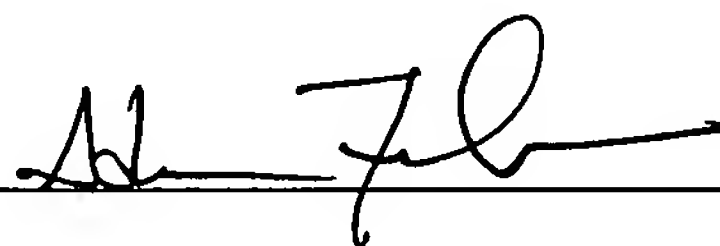
A Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited.

If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been requested separately, such extension is hereby requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees and to credit any overpayments that may be required by this paper under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 to Deposit Account No. 02-2135.

Respectfully submitted,

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